

GREEN FANCY

BY GEORGE BARR
MCCUTCHEON

Author of "GRAUSTARK," "THE HOLLOW OF HER HAND," "THE PRINCE OF GRAUSTARK," "FROM THE HOUSETOPS," ETC.

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CHAPTER XV—Continued.

His uneasiness increased to consternation when he discovered that Sprouse had not yet put in an appearance. What had become of the man? He could not help feeling, however, that somehow the little agent would suddenly pop out of the chimney in his room, or sneak in through a crack under the door—and laugh at his fears.

Shortly before the noon hour, Peter Ames landed the old automobile from Green Fancy in front of the Tavern and out stepped O'Dowd, followed by no less a personage than the pseudo Mr. Loeb. There were a number of traveling bags in the tonneau of the car.

Catching sight of Barnes, the Irishman shouted a genial greeting.

"The top of the morning to ye. You remember Mr. Loeb, don't you? Mr. Curtis' secretary. Mr. Loeb is leaving as for a few days on business. Good morning, Mr. Boneface," he called out to Putnam Jones who approached at that juncture. "We are sadly in want of gasoline."

Barnes caught the look that the Irishman shot at him out of the corner of his eye.

"Perhaps you'd better see that the scoundrels don't give us short measure," Mr. Loeb said O'Dowd. Loeb hesitated for a second, and then, evidently in obedience to a command from the speaker's eye, moved off to where Peter was opening the intake.

O'Dowd lowered his voice. "Barnes, I let you off last night, and I let her off as well. In return, I ask you to hold your tongue until the man down there gets a fair start. A day's start and—"

"Are you in danger, too, O'Dowd?"

"To be sure—but I love it. I can always squirm out of tight places."

"I would not deliberately put you in jeopardy, O'Dowd."

"See here, I am going back to that house up yonder. There is still work for me there. What I'm after now is to get him on the train at Hornville. I'll be here again at four o'clock, on my word of honor. Trust me, Barnes."

"Do you mean to say that you are coming back here to run the risk of being—"

"We've had word that the government has men on the way. Why, hang it all, Barnes, don't you know who it was that engineered that whole business last night?"

Barnes smiled. "I do. He is a secret agent from the embassy."

"Secret granny!" almost shouted O'Dowd. "He is the slickest, cleverest crook that ever drew the breath of life. And he's got away with the jewels, for which you can whistle in vain, I'm thinking."

"For heaven's sake, O'Dowd—" began Barnes, his blood like ice in his veins.

"But don't take my word for it. Ask her—upstairs there. God bless her!—ask her if she knows Chester

fore. In the name of God, Barnes, how did you happen to fall in with the villain?"

Barnes passed his hand over his brow, dazed. "He—he represented himself as a book agent," he mumbled, striving to collect himself. "Jones knew him. Said he had been around here for weeks. I—"

"That's the man," said O'Dowd, scowling. "He trotted all over the county, selling books. For the love of it, do ye think? Not much. He had other fish to fry, you may be sure. Barnes, if we ever lay hands on that friend of yours—well, he won't have to fry in hell. He'll be burnt alive. Thank God, my mind's at rest on one score. She didn't skip out with him. They all think he did. Not one of them suspects that she came away with you. There is plenty of evidence that she let him in through her window—"

"All ready, O'Dowd," called Loeb. "Come along, please."

"Coming," said the Irishman. "Don't blame yourself, old man. See you later, Barnes. So long!"

CHAPTER XVI.

The First Wayfarer Visits a Shrine, Confesses, and Takes an Oath.

How was he to find the courage to impart the appalling news to her? He was now convinced beyond all doubt that the so-called Sprouse had made off with the priceless treasure and that only a miracle could bring about its recovery. He realized to what extent he had been shaped into a tool to be used by the master craftsman. He saw through the whole Machiavellian scheme, and he was also now morally certain that Sprouse would have sacrificed him without the slightest hesitation.

In the event that anything went wrong with their enterprise, the man would have shot him dead and earned the gratitude and commendation of his associates! He would have been glorified and not crucified by his friends.

With a heavy heart he mounted the stairs. At the top he paused to deliberate. Would it not be better to keep her in ignorance? What was to be gained by revealing to her the— But Miss Thackeray was luring him on to destruction. She stood outside the door and beckoned. Then she closed the door from the outside, and Barnes was alone with the cousin of kings and queens and princes.

"I feared you had deserted me," she said, holding out her hand to him as he strode across the room.

"I saw no occasion to disturb your rest," he mumbled.

"I have been peeping," she said, looking at him searchingly. "Where is Mr. Loeb going, Mr. Barnes?"

"O'Dowd says he is to be gone for a few days on business," he equivocated.

"He will not return," she said quietly. "He is a coward at heart. Oh, I know him well," she went on, scorn in her voice.

"Was I wrong in not trying to stop him?" she asked.

She pondered this for a moment. "No," she said, but he caught the dubious note in her voice. "It is just as well, perhaps, that he should disappear. His flight today spares—but we are more interested in the man Sprouse. Has he returned?"

"No, Miss Cameron," said he ruefully. And then, without a single reservation, he laid bare the story of Sprouse's defection. When he inquired if she had heard of the man known as Chester Nalmsmith, she confirmed his worst fear by describing him as the guard who watched beneath her window. He was known to her as a thief of international fame.

"You were no match for Chester Nalmsmith. Do not look so glum. The shrewdest police officers in Europe have never been able to cope with him. Why should you despair?"

He sprang to his feet. "By gad, he hasn't got away with it yet," he grated. "I will run this scoundrel down if I have to devote the remainder of my life to the task."

She sighed. "Alas, I fear that I shall have to tell you a little more about this wonderful man you know as Sprouse. Six months ago the friends and supporters of the legitimate successor to my country's throne consummated a plan whereby the crown jewels and certain documents of state were surreptitiously removed from the palace vaults. Instead of depositing the treasure in Paris, it was sent to this country in charge of a group of men whose fealty could not be questioned. The man you know as Loeb is in reality my cousin. I have known him all my life. He is the youngest brother of the pretender to the throne, and a cousin of the prince who is held prisoner by the Austrians. This prince has a brother also, and it was to him that I was supposed to deliver the jewels. I traveled from New York, but not alone as you may suspect. I was carefully protected from the time I left my hotel there until—well, until I arrived in Boston.

"While there I received a secret message from friends in Canada di-

recting me to go to Spanish Falls, where I would be met and conducted by Prince Sebastian himself to the place called Green Fancy, which was near the Canadian border. A safe escort would be provided for us, and we would be on British soil within a few hours after our meeting. It is only necessary to add that when I arrived at Green Fancy I met Prince Ugo—and understood! I had carefully covered my tracks after leaving Boston. My real friends were, and still are, completely in the dark as to my movements, so skillfully was the trick managed.

"And now for Chester Nalmsmith. It was he who, acting for the misguided loyalists and recommended by certain young aristocrats who by virtue of their own dissipations had come to know him as a man of infinite resourcefulness and daring, planned and carried out the pillaging of the palace vaults. Almost under the noses of the foreign guards he succeeded in obtaining the jewels. No doubt he could have made off with them at that time, but he shrewdly preferred to have them brought to America by some one else. It would have been impossible for him to dispose of them in Europe. You see how cunning he is?"

"He was no doubt thwarted in his design to waylay me on the road from Spanish Falls by a singular occurrence in this tavern. He was attacked in his room here, overpowered, bound and gagged by two men. He knew the men. They were thieves as clever and as merciless as himself. They too were watching for me. I do not know how these men learned of my intention to come to Green Fancy."

"They came to the Tavern four or five days before your arrival at Green Fancy," Barnes interrupted. "Sprouse told me that they were secret service men from abroad and that he was working with them. My theory is this, and I think it is justified by events: The men were really secret agents, sent here to watch the movements of the gang up there. They came upon Sprouse and recognized him. On the day mentioned they overpowered him and forced him to reveal certain facts connected with affairs at Green Fancy. Possibly he led them to believe that you were one of the conspirators. They waited for your arrival and then risked the hazardous trip to Green Fancy. They were discovered and shot."

"I believe you are right," she cried. "Then we have accounted for Mr. Sprouse, and I am no longer interested in the unraveling of the mystery surrounding the deaths of Roon and Paul," said Barnes. "There is nothing to keep me here any longer, Miss Cameron. I suggest that you allow me to escort you at once to your friends, wherever they—"

She was opposed to this plan. While there was still a chance that Sprouse might be apprehended in the neighborhood, or the possibility of his being caught by the relentless pursuers, she declined to leave.

"Then, I shall also stay," said he promptly, and was repaid by the tremulous smile she gave him. He was helplessly in love with this beautiful cousin of kings and queens. And when he thought of kings and queens he realized that beyond all question his love was hopeless.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Second Wayfarer Is Transformed.

O'Dowd returned late in the afternoon. He was in a hurry to get back to Green Fancy; there was no mistaking his uneasiness.

"For the love of heaven, Barnes, get her away from here as soon as possible, and do it as secretly as you can," he said. "I may as well tell you that she is in more danger from the government secret service than from anyone up yonder."

"She may prefer to face the music, O'Dowd. If I know her at all, she will refuse to run away."

"Then ye'll have to kidnap her," said the Irishman earnestly. "There will be men swarming here from both sides of the border by tomorrow night or next day. It's the gospel truth, and it's going to be bad for all of us if we're here when they come."

"Who is she, O'Dowd? Man to man, tell me the truth. I want to know just where I stand."

O'Dowd hesitated, looked around the taproom, and then leaned across the table.

"Miss Cameron is in reality the Countess Therese Mara-Dafanda—familiarily and lovingly known in her own land as the Countess Ted. She was visiting in this country when the war broke out. If it is of any use to you, I'll add that she would be rich if Aladdin could only come to life and restore the splendors of the demolished castle, refill the chests of gold that have been emptied by the conquerors, and restock the farms that have been pillaged and devastated. In the absence of Aladdin, however, she is almost as poor as the ancient church mouse. So there you are, man. Alas the royal progeny of Eu-

rope have been suitors for her hand, and the other half would be if they didn't happen to be of the same sex. Good-by. I must be on my way." He arose and held out his hand. "Good-by and good luck forever."

"You are a brick, O'Dowd. I want to see you again. You will always find me—"

"Thanks. Don't issue any rash invitations. I might take you up."

Barnes started upstairs as soon as O'Dowd was off, urged by an eagerness that put wings on his feet and a thrill of excitement in his blood. Halfway up he stopped short. A new condition confronted him. What was the proper way to approach a person of royal blood? He would have to think. Pausing at her door, he was at once aware of voices inside the room.

He rapped on the door, but so timorously that nothing came of it. His second effort was productive. He



"Miss Cameron is Lovingly Known in Her Own Land as the Countess Ted."

heard Miss Thackeray say "good gracious," and, after a moment, Miss Cameron's subdued: "What is it?"

"May I come in?" he inquired, rather ashamed of his vigor. "It's only Barnes."

"Come in," was her lively response. "It was awfully good of you, Miss Thackeray, to let me hear your lines. I think you will be a great success in the part."

"Thanks," said Miss Thackeray dryly. "I'll come in again and let you hear me in the third act." She went out, mumbling her lines as she passed Barnes without seeing him.

"I hope you will feel able to leave this place tomorrow, countess. We must get away almost immediately."

"Ah, you have been listening to O'Dowd, I see."

"Yes, he tells me it will be dangerous to—"

"He is right. It would be difficult for me to clear myself. No one would believe that I did not deliberately make off with the jewels. They would say that I—oh, it is too dreadful!"

"Don't worry about that," he exclaimed. "You have me to testify that—"

"How little you know of intrigue," she cried. "They would laugh at you and say that you were merely another fool who had lost his head over a woman. They would say that I duped you—"

"No!" he cried vehemently. "You people know better than you think. You are disheartened, discouraged. Things will look brighter tomorrow."

"I don't know what I should do without you," she said.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Sprouse Continues to Be Perplexed, and Puts His Nose to the Ground.

Barnes was absent early. He was at breakfast when Peter Ames called up. An inspiration seized him when the chauffeur mentioned the wholesale exodus: he hired Peter forthwith and ordered him to report immediately with the car. He was going up to Green Fancy for Miss Cameron's wardrobe.

Two minutes after Peter drove up to the Tavern he was on the way back to Green Fancy again, and sent beside him was Thomas Kingsbury Barnes, his new master.

There was not a sign of human life about the place. Peter accompanied him upstairs to the room recently occupied by Miss Cameron.

They found two small leather trunks, thickly belabored, in the room upstairs. Both were locked.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Altair vs. Halter. Said the facetious feller: "Nobed expects a wedding ceremony in a through, without a hitch."

Sammy's Sudden Shift

By JOHN HAMILTON

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Sammy Edwards, a taxi driver in a circus town, fell under the spell of the sawdust. So in the autumn, when the biggest of the four circuses came home to winter quarters, he struck the menagerie superintendent for a job. Foddlie sent him to McGuire, the "cat house" boss, and after talking to McGuire for ten minutes, Sammy climbed back into his taxi an accepted member of the staff of the Great and Only, with orders to report Sunday morning.

After it was all settled, Sammy broke the news to Kitty Elwood—and Kitty, without any ado whatever, broke their engagement.

"If that's all the consideration I get from you, Sam Edwards," Kitty vehemently remarked, "all you get from me after this is none at all. It's off—all off, and off for good. Here's your hat."

"But, Kit," expostulated Sammy, "you don't get it at all. It's only for one year. Look it. I qualify as a full-fledged keeper in a couple of months. Before the show goes out I'm a fancy trainer and go one trip with an animal act—see? It'll get us more than I could save in three years at the old job—enough to start right!"

"Two pu-pshaws and a pu-pifle!" Kitty, you see, worked in a paper-box factory. "Do you see much green in my eye? You're going with the circus because you've gone nuts on it—like every little boy in this town. You in a ring act! In five months! You're sweeping out cages the rest of life—chambermaid to a smelly lot of animated old fur sets. You've lost out with me, Mr. Edwards. My husband's gotta have a balance wheel that can't be queered by circus charlots. Goodby!"

There was a finality about this that sent Sammy on his way without further word. Whereupon Kitty climbed two flights of stairs and wept copiously for an hour.

Sammy didn't spend all that winter just chambermaiding to cat animals. He got to be a keeper with a certain cage of peculiarly pernickety leopards as his most especial care. He soon learned, however, that he wouldn't be in any ring act by next spring. It was January before McGuire would let him go into the leopard's cage without a pointed iron bar in his hand, and February before he felt the least at home in that environment.

But when March came, Sammy had got along so far that when he signed up for the touring season there was a clause in his contract giving him forty-five dollars a month extra for riding in that cage of spotted cats in the daily parade—and the show furnished the fleshings.

Opening in the "Garden" at New York, where circus parades have long been a thing of the past, the second booking was in the show's—and Sammy's—home town. As the fates would have it, it rained pitchforks at the first day's stand, and there was no parade. So that Sammy was called on to make his debut as an "animal king" before the eyes of his own townspeople. Also his first appearance in fights.

Now Sammy had never ceased to be sore in spirit over the defection of Kitty Elwood. Even among the sylphs whom he had encountered during the winter, prattling and rehearsing animal acts or careering about the ring in the equestrian pavilion, there had been none equal to the task of displacing Kitty in his heart—and some very nice girls there were among them, at that. Wherefore, as Sammy climbed into his nest of feline revolutionists it was with mingled emotions that he assured himself that Kitty would certainly be somewhere in the street crowds and that she could not fail to see him. What would she think, he wondered.

It was a new cage. Cat animals of all kinds hate new surroundings—witness Tabby at home. It was the first street parade. Caliph, the head devil of the leopard clan, detested the noise of band music. None of the family was overly fond of human beings, and crowds of them frazzled leopardian nerves completely.

A leopard with rasper nerves is dangerous. To make it worse, the cats, thanks to delays in the costuming department, had never before seen Sammy in pink tights. And to top it all, Sammy was nervous himself—something a trainer has no earthly business to be, ever. And the more he thought of Kitty being somewhere in the crowd the more nervous he became.

The parade hadn't gone two blocks before Caliph, sensing the unrest in his master, began to show his independence. He snaked every time he passed Sammy in that never ending promenade of the cage, glared at him sideways and snarled—getting a rousing belt on the nose with Sammy's rawhide that didn't improve his temper. But Caliph wasn't alone in his mood.

Eliza, his big mate, never took her baleful eyes off Sammy for an instant, while Hindoo, the biggest of the youngsters, kept his mouth open and his teeth bared two-thirds of the time. Even Never and Forever, the hitherto fairly amiable cubs, frankly and open-

ly forebore allegiance to the banner of King Edwards.

It helped matters not at all that at the very first avenue crossing some one on the curb yelled: "Pipe Sammy Edwards all done up in pinkies! Gee, Sammy, but it brings out the legs great!"—an extremely embarrassing remark, since Sammy from boyhood had been painfully conscious of his slightly bowed nether limbs.

Well, what with the animals acting like the deuce and the kidding he got from old acquaintances along the line, and what with—most of all—keeping on the lookout for Kitty the eyes that should have been attending very strictly indeed to the leopards, it happened.

The spotted beasts, always the bane of menagerie men's existence at best, were on the verge of getting out of hand when the cage reached that particular juncture of two important thoroughfares where Sammy's taxi had been wont to stand o' nights.

Involuntarily Sammy let his eyes divert from his snarling, feverishly pacing charges, to the old spot. And there, on the edge of the sidewalk, stood Harriman, his old taxi days employer, and—evidently quite by accident, just beside him—stood Kitty!

Kitty was white, as Sammy's glance fell on her. Kitty was frightened. For Kitty had been able to sense what scarcely anybody in the crowd suspected, for she had been investigating this animal business a deal in the last six months, had Kitty.

She knew that things were going wrong in that cage. As her eyes and Sammy's met, she raised her hand in one imperious, undeniable gesture, and through white lips screamed over all the fanfare of the pageant, "Duck, Sammy!"

Sammy ducked—and the razor-like claws of Caliph missed him by the thinness of a whistle as the snarling beast hurtled through the air. There was a whirl of tawny, black spotted bodies and a horrifying scrambling and snarling; an agile flashing of pink; one, two, three rapid blank shots in the faces of the frantic cats—and, like a jack out of his box, Sammy emerged from the rear door of the cage, slamming in the hush behind him. In two jumps he reached the sidewalk.

There was no interlude. "Can I have my job back?" he demanded of Harriman.

"You can," replied Harriman. In just five seconds Sammy Edwards had quit one job and secured another.

"Come on, Kitty," he breathlessly urged, grasping that almost fainting young woman by the arm; "I'll borrow a raincoat in Ferguson's and we'll go somewhere and have a little talk. You can't kid me after the look that was on your face just now."

Kitty might, of course, have told him that she'd have felt just the same about a perfect stranger. But—oh, what was the use? She was too glad to have him back alive.

SCHOOLBOOKS OF LONG AGO

Ancient Tablets Show That Children of Past Ages Studied Much as Do Those of Today.

Professor Langdon of Oxford, Eng., has discovered that one group of the famous Nippur tablets stored at the University of Pennsylvania are in reality the oldest schoolbooks known to exist. They show, says the Christian Herald, that the children of the ancients learned much that the boys and girls of today have to study.

According to these tablets the children of 4,200 years ago were taught arithmetic, geography, history and grammar just like the children of today.

The multiplication tables are remarkably distinct, and in plain numerals show the incontrovertible fact that three times one are three and five times one are five.

On one tablet the school boy has been given a lesson in phonetic signs corresponding to the shorthand of modern times. The Sumerians, the authors of these tablets, also invented the use of writing syllables and combining them into words, being the first step toward the alphabet.

One Strange Result of War.

Strange, unknown flowers are springing up in shell holes and dugouts over the scarred surface of No Man's land, and many are the conjectures concerning the strange phenomenon.

Botanists who have studied the strange plants have come to the conclusion that they have sprung from seeds buried in the earth for many decades. A well-known London botanist in a recent discussion said:

"It is known that seeds have been buried for upwards of 60 years without losing their power of germination. Seeds of corn and wheat buried with Egyptian mummies thousands of years ago have been planted out in the 20th century and have germinated in the ordinary way. It is quite possible that strange flowering plants—that is, strange to the local inhabitants—are now flowering in the French battlefields. The heavy shell fire which has torn up the earth may have created conditions for their growth after lying dormant so long."

Return of the Wanderers.

"I'm kind of afraid of universal prohibition," remarked Cactus Joe.

"But Crimson Gulch has improved visibly."

"Yes. When the Gulch went dry the worst element of our little burg went over to that near-by gin mill metropolis, Coyote Center. With universal prohibition they're all liable to think they might be Jes' as well off if they came back home."



He Was Known to Her as a Thief of International Fame.

Nalmsmith. She'll tell ye, my bucko. He's been standing guard outside her window for the past three nights. He's—"

"Now I know you are mistaken," cried Barnes, a wave of relief surging over him. "He has been in this tavern every night—"

"Sure he has. But answer me, did ye ever see him here after eleven in the evening? You did not—not until last night, anyhow. In the struggle he had with Nicholas last night he was recognized. That's why poor old Nicholas is lying dead up there at the house now—and will have a decent burial unbeknownst to anybody but his friends."

"Good God, O'Dowd, you can't mean that he—"

"He stuck a knife in his neck. The dirty snake! And the chief trusted